IN THE CLAIMS

1-3. (canceled)

4. (currently amended) ~~The method of claim 1, further comprising:~~ A method for selecting a group of bidders for a current bidding event to auction a lot having one or more items, said method comprising:

identifying a prior bidding event having occurred before said current bidding event, wherein said prior bidding event includes a plurality of contact events for each bidder participating in said prior bidding event;

further identifying one or more participating bidders for said prior bidding event;

quantifying participation of each identified bidder in each of said plurality of contact events for said prior bidding event, thereby generating a corresponding participation score for each said identified bidder;

prioritizing the identified bidders in a first descending order based on said corresponding participation score, thereby generating a first prioritized list of bidders;

selecting said group of bidders for said current bidding event from said first prioritized list of bidders;

further identifying each bid-in event for said prior bidding event, wherein each said bid-in event is one of said plurality of contact events and relates to bids received from one or more identified bidders during said prior bidding event;

obtaining a corresponding rank for each said identified bidder for each said bid-in event in which said identified bidder has participated;

quantifying each corresponding rank for each said identified bidder for each said bid-in event in which said identified bidder has participated, thereby generating a corresponding competitiveness score for each said identified bidder;

prioritizing the identified bidders in a second descending order based on said corresponding competitiveness score, thereby generating a second prioritized list of bidders; and

selecting said group of bidders for said current bidding event from at least one of said first prioritized list of bidders and said second prioritized list of bidders.

5. (original) The method of claim 4, wherein selecting said group of bidders from at least one of said first and said second prioritized lists of bidders includes one of the following:

selecting a predetermined number of top bidders from at least one of said first and said second prioritized lists of bidders as said group of bidders for said current bidding event; and

selecting a user-specified number of top bidders from at least one of said first and said second prioritized lists of bidders as said group of bidders for said current bidding event.

6. (original) The method of claim 4, wherein identifying each said bid-in event includes
identifying each said bid-in event for each lot that was placed on auction during said prior bidding event,

wherein obtaining said corresponding rank includes obtaining said corresponding rank for each said identified bidder for each said bid-in event for each said lot identified for said prior bidding event, and

wherein quantifying each said corresponding rank includes quantifying each said corresponding rank for each said identified bidder for each said bid-in event for each said lot identified for said prior bidding event.

7. (original) The method of claim 4, further comprising:
generating a corresponding combined score for each said identified bidder using said corresponding participation score and competitiveness score;

prioritizing the identified bidders in a third descending order based on said corresponding combined score, thereby generating a third prioritized list of bidders; and

selecting said group of bidders for said current bidding event from said third prioritized list of bidders.

8. (original) The method of claim 7, wherein each said combined score is generated using the following formula:

$$\text{combined score} = \sqrt{(\text{participation score})^2 + (\text{competiveness score})^2}$$

9. (withdrawn) The method of claim 7, further comprising displaying at least one of the following on an electronic display terminal:

at least one list of bidders from said first prioritized list of bidders, said second prioritized list of bidders, and said third prioritized list of bidders;

said group of bidders selected from at least one of said first prioritized list of bidders, said second prioritized list of bidders, and said third prioritized list of bidders; and

at least one of said corresponding participation score, said corresponding competitiveness score, and said corresponding combined score for each said identified bidder.

10. (withdrawn) The method of claim 7, wherein selecting said group of bidders from said third prioritized list includes one of the following:

selecting a predetermined number of top bidders from said third prioritized list of bidders as said group of bidders for said current bidding event; and

selecting a user-specified number of top bidders from said third prioritized list of bidders as said group of bidders for said current bidding event.

11. (withdrawn) The method of claim 7, further comprising:

allowing a user to specify a set of one or more criteria;

searching an electronic database using said set of criteria to select said group of bidders for said current bidding event, wherein said database includes information about a plurality of bidders arranged according to said set of criteria, and wherein said plurality of bidders includes said group of bidders for said current bidding event; and

electronically presenting to said user at least the name of each bidder in said group of bidders for said current bidding event obtained by searching said electronic database.

12. (withdrawn) The method of claim 11, wherein said information about said plurality of bidders includes at least one of the following:

the name of each of said plurality of bidders;

a first information about process capabilities of each of said plurality of bidders;

a second information about sales revenue of each of said plurality of bidders;

4

a third information about quality certification status of each of said plurality of bidders;

a fourth information about geographic location of each of said plurality of bidders;

said corresponding participation score for each of said plurality of bidders;

said corresponding competitiveness score for each of said plurality of bidders; and

said corresponding combined score for each of said plurality of bidders.

13. (withdrawn) A method for selecting a group of bidders for a current bidding event to auction a lot having one or more items, said method comprising:

identifying a prior bidding event having occurred before said current bidding event, wherein said prior bidding event includes a plurality of contact events for each bidder participating in said prior bidding event;

further identifying one or more participating bidders for said prior bidding event;

further identifying each bid-in event for said prior bidding event, wherein each said bid-in event is one of said plurality of contact events and relates to bids received from one or more identified bidders during said prior bidding event;

obtaining a corresponding rank for each said identified bidder for each said bid-in event in which said identified bidder has participated;

quantifying each corresponding rank for each said identified bidder for each said bid-in event in which said identified bidder has participated, thereby generating a corresponding competitiveness score for each said identified bidder;

prioritizing the identified bidders in a descending order based on said corresponding competitiveness score, thereby generating a prioritized list of bidders; and

selecting said group of bidders for said current bidding event from said prioritized list of bidders.

14. (withdrawn) The method of claim 13, wherein identifying said prior bidding event includes searching a first electronic database containing an information about one or more bidding events having occurred before said current bidding event, and

wherein identifying said one or more participating bidders includes searching a second electronic database using said information about said identified prior bidding event,

wherein said second electronic database contains identity information for all bidders corresponding to said one or more bidding events from said first electronic database.

15. (withdrawn) The method of claim 13, wherein selecting said group of bidders from said prioritized list of bidders includes one of the following:

selecting a predetermined number of top bidders from said prioritized list of bidders as said group of bidders for said current bidding event; and

selecting a user-specified number of top bidders from said prioritized list of bidders as said group of bidders for said current bidding event.

16. (withdrawn) The method of claim 13, wherein identifying each said bid-in event includes identifying each said bid-in event for each lot that was placed on auction during said prior bidding event,

wherein obtaining said corresponding rank includes obtaining said corresponding rank for each said identified bidder for each said bid-in event for each said lot identified for said prior bidding event, and

wherein quantifying each said corresponding rank includes quantifying each said corresponding rank for each said identified bidder for each said bid-in event for each said lot identified for said prior bidding event.

17. (withdrawn) The method of claim 13, further comprising:

allowing a user to specify a set of one or more criteria;

searching an electronic database using said set of criteria to select said group of bidders for said current bidding event, wherein said database includes information about a plurality of bidders arranged according to said set of criteria, and wherein said plurality of bidders includes said group of bidders for said current bidding event; and
electronically presenting to said user at least the name of each bidder in said group of bidders for said current bidding event obtained by searching said electronic database.

18. (withdrawn) The method of claim 17, wherein said information about said plurality of bidders includes at least one of the following:

6

the name of each of said plurality of bidders;

a first information about process capabilities of each of said plurality of bidders;

a second information about sales revenue of each of said plurality of bidders;

a third information about quality certification status of each of said plurality of bidders;

a fourth information about geographic location of each of said plurality of bidders; and

said corresponding competitiveness score for each of said plurality of bidders.

19. (withdrawn) The method of claim 13, further comprising displaying at least one of the following on an electronic display terminal:

said prioritized list of bidders;

said group of bidders selected from said prioritized list of bidders; and

said corresponding competitiveness score for each said identified bidder.

20. (canceled)

21. (currently amended) ~~The computer readable medium of claim 20, wherein said instructions, when executed by said processor, further cause said processor to:~~ A computer readable medium having stored thereon instructions to select a group of bidders for a current bidding event to auction a lot having one or more items, wherein said instructions, when executed by a processor, cause said processor to:

search a first electronic database containing an information about one or more bidding events having occurred before said current bidding event to identify a prior bidding event therefrom, wherein said prior bidding event includes a plurality of contact events for each bidder participating in said prior bidding event;

search a second electronic database using said information about said identified prior bidding event to identify one or more participating bidders for said prior bidding event, wherein said second electronic database contains identity information for all bidders corresponding to said one or more bidding events from said first electronic database;

quantify participation of each identified bidder in each of said plurality of contact

7

events for said prior bidding event, thereby generating a corresponding participation score for each said identified bidder;

prioritize the identified bidders in a first descending order based on said corresponding participation score, thereby generating a first prioritized list of bidders;

select said group of bidders for said current bidding event from said first prioritized list of bidders;

identify each bid-in event for said prior bidding event, wherein each said bid-in event is one of said plurality of contact events and relates to bids received from one or more identified bidders during said prior bidding event;

obtain a corresponding rank for each said identified bidder for each said bid-in event in which said identified bidder has participated;

quantify each corresponding rank for each said identified bidder for each said bid-in event in which said identified bidder has participated, thereby generating a corresponding competitiveness score for each said identified bidder;

prioritize the identified bidders in a second descending order based on said corresponding competitiveness score, thereby generating a second prioritized list of bidders; and

select said group of bidders for said current bidding event from at least one of said first prioritized list of bidders and said second prioritized list of bidders.

22. (original) The computer readable medium of claim 21, wherein said instructions, when executed by said processor, further cause said processor to:

generate a corresponding combined score for each said identified bidder using said corresponding participation score and competitiveness score;

prioritize the identified bidders in a third descending order based on said corresponding combined score, thereby generating a third prioritized list of bidders; and

select said group of bidders for said current bidding event from said third prioritized list of bidders.

23. (original) The computer readable medium of claim 21, wherein said instructions, when executed by said processor, further cause said processor to display at least one of the following on an electronic display terminal:

at least one list of bidders from said first prioritized list of bidders, and said second prioritized list of bidders;

said group of bidders selected from at least one of said first prioritized list of bidders, and said second prioritized list of bidders; and

at least one of said corresponding participation score, and said corresponding competitiveness score for each said identified bidder.

24. (new) A method for selecting a group of bidders for a current bidding event to auction a lot having one or more items, said method comprising:

identifying a prior bidding event having occurred before said current bidding event, wherein said prior bidding event includes a plurality of contact events for each bidder participating in said prior bidding event, wherein said plurality of contact events includes a bid-in event, a sent request for quote event, and a fact sheet event;

further identifying one or more participating bidders for said prior bidding event;

quantifying participation of each identified bidder in each of said plurality of contact events for said prior bidding event, thereby generating a corresponding participation score for each said identified bidder;

prioritizing the identified bidders in a first descending order based on said corresponding participation score, thereby generating a first prioritized list of bidders; and

selecting said group of bidders for said current bidding event from said first prioritized list of bidders.

25. (new) The method of claim 24, wherein identifying said prior bidding event includes searching a first electronic database containing an information about one or more bidding events having occurred before said current bidding event, and

wherein identifying said one or more participating bidders includes searching a second electronic database using said information about said identified prior bidding event,

wherein said second electronic database contains identity information for all bidders corresponding to said one or more bidding events from said first electronic database.

26. (new) The method of claim 24, wherein identifying said prior bidding event includes identifying each lot that was placed on auction during said prior bidding event, and

           wherein quantifying participation of each said identified bidder includes quantifying participation of each said identified bidder in each of said plurality of contact events for each said lot identified for said prior bidding event.

27. (new) A computer readable medium having stored thereon instructions to select a group of bidders for a current bidding event to auction a lot having one or more items, wherein said instructions, when executed by a processor, cause the processor to:

           search a first electronic database containing an information about one or more bidding events having occurred before said current bidding event to identify a prior bidding event therefrom, wherein said prior bidding event includes a plurality of contact events for each bidder participating in said prior bidding event, wherein said plurality of contact events includes a bid-in event, a sent request for quote event, and a fact sheet event;

           search a second electronic database using said information about said identified prior bidding event to identify one or more participating bidders for said prior bidding event, wherein said second electronic database contains identity information for all bidders corresponding to said one or more bidding events from said first electronic database;

           quantify participation of each identified bidder in each of said plurality of contact events for said prior bidding event, thereby generating a corresponding participation score for each said identified bidder;

           prioritize the identified bidders in a first descending order based on said corresponding participation score, thereby generating a first prioritized list of bidders; and

           select said group of bidders for said current bidding event from said first prioritized list of bidders.